

Put a pine tree in your tank

by David Williamson, Park Ranger

We've all heard the saying 'one mans trash is another man's treasure' and understand what it means. In the near future, that saying may be reinforced in the timber industry in a big way.

After logging operations have ceased there is usually a large amount of debris left on site that was either too small to sell, unmarketable, broken, bent or destroyed during harvesting operations. Normally this trash is left on site as natural fertilizer as it breaks down and feeds the next generation of trees. However, the high price of gasoline/crude oil may be changing this by-product of timber harvesting operations from trash to a valuable commodity.

The Pottlatch Corporation in Arkansas is in the process of bringing a mill on line that will take that normally unused logging debris and turn it into the bio-fuel ethanol. Scheduled for operation by 2011, this mill will take agriculture and woody debris down to 2" in diameter, chip it to 1cm x 1cm in size, and thru the use of high temperatures (gasification technology) covert the sugars in the cellulose in the woody biomass to ethanol.

This is a first of its kind operation aimed at the commercial market with wide ranging implications. This Fully Integrated Agricultural and Forest Products Biorefinery is planned for an existing pulpwood

mill at Cypress Bend, Arkansas on the Mississippi river. Pottlatch is looking for partners in this undertaking and is noting that no one has ever attempted this type of operation before and there are definite risks associated with the endeavor. It's all related to the price of a barrel of crude oil. If the price of crude oil stays high, this concept may prove to be profitable/successful as a new source of renewable bio-fuel for the country.

This new technology has the potential of producing up to 10,000 barrels/day of transportation grade bio-fuels (diesel, ethanol & others). Thousands of new jobs could be created surrounding these refineries, and new revenues of up to \$9 Billion/year throughout the industry. The Energy Policy Act of 2005 has provisions that would encourage the annual production of 1 billion gallons per year of bio-fuels from cellulosic sources by 2015. Clearly this new operation could exert a very big influence on the decisions made by forest managers for future crops and rotation cycles of forest products.



Unharvested pine forest.

Photo by Jonas Jordan



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Summer 2006

Lake Times

J. Strom Thurmond, Savannah District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



HOW WAS WORK TODAY? "OH, JUST ANOTHER DAY IN PARADISE!"

by Jay Weidman, Park Ranger

The Ranger staff at the J. Strom Thurmond Lake, although largely unnoticed by the public, is a vital link in the management and operation of the 151,000 acre project. Coming from all areas of the country and all walks of life, they share a common goal of ensuring Thurmond remains one of the best Corps of Engineers lakes in the nation and providing visitors with a memorable recreation experience. A recent article in the June 2006 edition of Columbia County Magazine details the myriad tasks performed by Rangers as part of their normal, everyday routine. One thing that quickly becomes apparent is there is usually no such thing as "just another day at the office." The challenging, the unusual, and the downright strange happen almost everyday. Whether a Ranger works in the recreation, shoreline management, or forest, fish and wildlife section, a collection of their tales in book form would likely end up classified as Fiction.

Columbia County Magazine's "2006 Guide to the Lake", found also in the June 2006 issue, covers many of the outstanding recreation opportunities available to residents and visitors alike. The article reminds us of what a priceless and precious treasure we have right at our own doorstep for our enjoyment; a treasured resource that is often taken for granted by too many people – and one that we should carefully guard and use wisely. As stewards of the Federal lands, Thurmond's Rangers will continue to quietly go about their jobs of protecting and preserving the lake as a mecca for the outdoor and nature enthusiasts for years to come.



Photo by Steve Bracci

Standing, left to right: Park Rangers Jill Davis, Wayne Toney, Jay Weidman, Jay Jamison, Allen Dean

Seated, left to right: Park Rangers Annette Carter, Chrissy Westenberg, Aaron Wahus

GET CAUGHT WEARING YOUR LIFE JACKET!

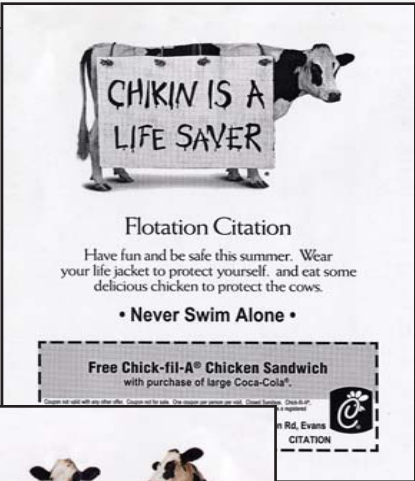
by Jay Weidman, Park Ranger



The Thurmond Lake Park Rangers, officers from the Georgia and South Carolina Departments of Natural Resources, and Rangers from the Mistletoe and Hamilton Branch State Parks are hoping to catch you wearing a life jacket this summer! These officers will be issuing “Flotation Citations” to lake users “caught” wearing their life jackets while participating in water-related activities on the lake. The “citation” can be redeemed for a free Chick-Fil-A sandwich.

Thurmond Lake is one of the most popular Corps of Engineers lakes in the nation with over six million visitors annually, the majority of whom engage in the numerous water-related activities offered at the lake. Thus, water safety is a very high priority for all the Federal, state and local agencies, as well as businesses operating on the lake. BKay Herrington, Unit Marketing Director of the Chick-Fil-A restaurant located at Mullins Crossing in Evans, Georgia has generously agreed to sponsor the Flotation Citation Initiative. In order to help promote safe use of the lake, Chick-Fil-A has provided 4,000 “citations” to be handed out by officers this summer.

The members of these agencies, with the support of community minded businesses and organizations like Chick-Fil-A, are cooperating to promote water safety among the general public by stressing the importance of wearing a life jacket. Remember to wear YOUR life jacket and maybe you'll get “busted” and be issued your own “Flotation Citation”.



Chick-Fil-A Citation

Independence Day 2006

by Jay Weidman, Park Ranger

This year our nation's birthday falls on a Tuesday. As we remember this special occasion, there will be many activities and music a plenty happening around Thurmond Lake throughout the entire week. The calendar of events includes:

July 1 – Raysville Marina is hosting music of the pickin' and grinin' variety, along with assorted activities and a fireworks show at dark. For additional information please contact Raysville Marina at 706-595-5582.

July 3 – Little River Marina will hold their annual Fun Family Festival and Concert with fireworks at dark. Please contact Pam Bugg, Little River Marina at 706-541-1358 for details.

July 8 – Thunder Over Thurmond sponsored by McCormick County, SC and Lincoln County, GA will bring more fireworks to the lake with a show starting at dark. Both counties will host assorted activities throughout the week preceding the fireworks display. Please contact George Woodsby, McCormick

County, SC at 864-852-2231 or Ginger Parham, Lincoln County, GA, 706-359-7970 for more information on the events scheduled for each county.

The staff at Thurmond Lake encourages everyone to have a safe, fun-filled and exciting 4th of July holiday and to be sure to enjoy the professional fireworks displays. Boaters, please exercise extra caution during this busy week and be especially courteous when leaving the fireworks displays after dark! Visitors are reminded that all fireworks are prohibited on the Thurmond project property unless specific, written permission has been obtained from the Army Corps of Engineers, J. Strom Thurmond Dam and Lake.

District Commander Col. Mark S. Held, Chief of Public Affairs Billy Birdwell, Editorial Director G. Jeanne Hodge, Editor/layout Craig Janhrette (912) 652-5450. This is an authorized unofficial publication of the Savannah District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It is published by the District's Public Affairs Office in accordance with provisions of Army Regulations 360-61. All contributions and inquiries should be directed to the Operations Project Manager's Office, J. Strom Thurmond Project, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 510 Clarks Hill Highway, Clarks Hill, S.C. 29821, telephone: 1-800-533-3478.



This road is in dire need of repair as evidenced by the ruts at the top of the photo.



This road has been successfully restored.

“Why Can’t We Leave The Roads Open?”

By Park Ranger Philip Stavale

The approaching hot weather means more folks coming out to fish and hike along the shoreline of Thurmond Lake. However, many times this also means people driving along roads that are closed to vehicular traffic. For example, when the Corps of Engineers allows timber harvesters to enter an area for logging, they often need to build a road to drive their heavy equipment and trucks through the woods on. After the loggers are finished, the roads and decks (areas where trees are loaded onto trucks) are seeded with a variety of grasses, which soon sprout and hold the bare soil in place. After seed planting, most of these roads need to be closed to prevent unauthorized use by cars, trucks, and ATV's.

In addition to prohibiting motor vehicle access, the roads are blocked or barricaded for several other reasons. The most obvious reason for restricting vehicles is that they can tear-up the new grass, preventing it from growing. As well as ground cover, the new grass also provides cover and food for numerous animal and insect species. Closing roads also prevents soil erosion into streams and the lake, thus protecting the aquatic environment. Unfortunately, it can also become necessary for road closures when people do not clean up after they visit an area and leave their trash and litter behind. Finally, some roads must remain closed in locations where special forest and wildlife management techniques are used, such as special plantings or demonstration areas.

Closing a road leading to public lands and the lake, even temporarily, is a difficult decision, and one that is not made arbitrarily. The Corps considers many things when making that decision such as previous use of the area, the work required to restore the road, and the possible effects of leaving the road open. Often, the road is reopened later to allow access to an area. The visiting public can assist in restoring these areas by not driving their vehicles into areas that are gated, barricaded, or posted closed. This does not mean these areas cannot be used; only that motor vehicular access to the area is prohibited. Low impact users such as hikers, cyclists, and equestrians are allowed and always welcome.

National Public Lands Day

National Public Lands Day will be celebrated on Saturday, September 30, 2006. Sponsored by the National Environmental Education and Training Foundation, Inc. (NEETF), National Public Lands Day is an opportunity for individuals, families, and interested groups to get involved at Thurmond Lake and aid in protecting and enhancing our natural resources. Last year nearly 80,000 people participated nationally in this event and more than 100 people participated at Thurmond Lake in a variety of activities including trail maintenance, trash pick-up and blue bird box construction. If you, your group or club have a project or just want to get involved and are interested in volunteering, please contact Park Ranger Jay Weidman at 1-800-533-3478, extension 1172.



Over 100 people supported NPLD activities at J. Strom Thurmond Lake last year.

